

Random Encounters

Monks of the Burning Tiger - Trial of the Burning Tigers

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Trial of the Burning Tigers

The monks of the Burning Tiger Monastery are trained in the deadly arts of martial combat. Within the walls of their [isolated fortress](#), they fight each other to establish who is the strongest of all. The final test for any aspiring candidate is a fierce battle against a large number of the monastery's students, followed by combat against the school's leader, [Magoun](#). Combatants that dare defile the monastery by entering without permission are also subjected to this test.

The test is divided up into several different trials, all of which take place in the monastery's training ground area. The entire contest is watched over by 10 monks armed with heavy crossbows on the courtyard catwalks, ordered to shoot any candidate the tries to flee or refuses to fight. The encounter is designed with monks in mind and other classes might suffer a serious disadvantage.



The monks of the burning tiger use the stats below. See the *Player's Handbook* for information on their special abilities:

Burning Tiger Monk: Male or female human Mnk 1; CR 1; Medium-size humanoid; HD 1d8+1; hp 9; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12; Atk +2 melee (1d6+2, unarmed strike), or +2 melee (1d6+2, kama), or +2 melee (1d6+2, nunchaku), or +2 melee (1d6+2, siangham), or +1 ranged (1d10/19-20, heavy crossbow); SA flurry of blows, stunning attack 1/day; SQ evasion, fast movement; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Hide +5, Jump +6, Swim +6, Tumble +5; Dodge, Improved Initiative.

Flurry of Blows: The Burning Tiger monk can use the full attack action to make one extra attack per round with an unarmed strike or a special monk weapon at his or her highest base attack, but this attack and each other attack made that round suffer a -2 penalty apiece. This penalty applies for 1 round, so it affects attacks of opportunity the monk might make before his or her next action. If armed with a kama, nunchaku, or siangham, the monk makes the extra attack either with that weapon or unarmed.

Stunning Attack (Su): Once per round (but not more than once per day), the Burning Tiger monk can stun a creature damaged by his or her unarmed attacks. The foe so struck must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 12) or be stunned for 1 round in addition to taking normal damage from the attack. Creatures immune to critical hits cannot be stunned with this attack.

Evasion (Ex): If a Burning Tiger monk makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he or she instead takes no damage.

Possessions: Any one of the following weapons: kama, nunchaku, siangham, or heavy crossbow (and 10 bolts).

The trials are described below:

Trial of the Pit

The first trial takes place in a large pit (20 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep) in the center of the training ground. The candidate must stand inside the pit, alone, armed with whatever weapons she chooses. A monk, armed with a single weapon, drops into the pit every 1d6 rounds to fight the candidate. The trial ends when the candidate has been defeated or 10 monks have been defeated. If the candidate survives, she has 5 rounds to rest (and heal up) before the next trial begins.

Trial of the Burning Arrows

The burning logs are removed and the candidate stands once again in the pit, armed with 10 javelins. Because of the depth of the pit, it is impossible to see anyone not standing within 5 feet of the edge. Roll the initiative for 10 separate monks. Once every round, a monk approaches the pit edge from a random direction and shoots at the candidate with flaming bolts from a heavy crossbow (+1d4 points of fire damage), before retreating. The trial is concluded when the candidate is dead, or has survived 10 rounds. The candidate can try to attack (with javelins) any monk that she sees, or jump up to strike them, but she cannot leave the pit. If the candidate survives, she has 5 rounds to rest (and heal up) before the next trial begins.

Trial of the Burning Bridge

A wooden plank covered with oil is placed over the pit, which is filled with burning logs and embers. The candidate stands in the middle of the plank and must fight more monks. A monk, armed with a single weapon, is sent down either side of the bridge to fight the candidate. Each time a monk is defeated, another goes down the bridge to fight.

The fire beneath the bridge will ignite the oil after 2d4 rounds, dealing 1d6 points of fire damage each round to everyone on the bridge. Once ignited, the bridge will collapse into the pit after it sustains 10 points of fire damage -- standing in the burning pit deals an additional 1d6 points of damage per round. The trial concludes when the bridge collapses, although any survivors must get out on their own. If the candidate survives, she has 5 rounds to rest (and heal up) before the next trial begins.

Trial of the Master

The final trial pits the candidate against the head of the monastery, [Magoun](#). The battle begins inside the pit, but the battle can move to any portion of the monastery. Magoun fights the candidate using the monastery's most treasured item, the [rod of the burning tiger](#). The candidate is free to use any and all methods to defeat Magoun, although she is still shot down if she tries to flee the compound. In trials against other Burning Tiger monks, the combat lasts until the candidate is defeated (Magoun does not try not to kill such a promising individual, but does not hesitate to do serious damage) or when Magoun is defeated or declares the contest concluded.

Trial's End

If a monk of the monastery survives the trials, she is then considered one of the elite of the school and treated accordingly. If the survivor was an enemy, then the monks grudgingly accept her as a worthy opponent and allow her to leave the monastery unmolested. However, if she kills Magoun in combat, the remaining monks attack en masse, hoping to avenge their master's death.

Bringing the Parts Together

If the PCs ever do find themselves inside the monastery, it's very possible that each one will have to face the trial singly. This can spell the doom of those without martial skills given the nature of the trials, so DMs should be very wary about how they use trial series. It may be a good idea to have Magoun allow the PCs to choose one of their number to represent the group, but DMs should also set this up in such a way that the group doesn't get bored while awaiting the outcome. Perhaps another situation is occurring while the chosen PC is undergoing the trial. For example, a needed NPC with information is caught along with the group, which allows for roleplaying while the chosen PC under trial by burning tiger continues to face the martial challenge at hand. If you have a friend who wants to stop by for one gaming session, you could even set up this person as the NPC for the game so that one group can roleplay getting information out of the NPC while your martial challenger undergoes the trial! (You can also have the person play other roles besides informant.)

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